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SUBJECT: EXPECTED FRENCH CONTRIBUTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

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    [1](#)C. PARIS 475  
    [1](#)D. PARIS 469

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Kathleen Allegrone for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. On April 10, Francois Richier, President Sarkozy's strategic affairs advisor, provided a review of expected French contributions to Afghanistan for 2009. Due to economic difficulties, the GOF expects to provide relatively modest French civilian assistance of approximately USD 40 million this year (an amount which is, however, a significant increase from the previously allotted USD 10 million for 2009). On the military front, the Elysee is focusing on how France can strengthen existing deployments without raising public outrage. Richier said that at the end of the year, France is expecting to turn RC-Capital over to Afghan security forces and other allies, which would allow the rotation of two battalions from RC-C to RC-East to join their maneuver battalion already in Kapisa in combat operations. Richier is also starting to look at the possibility of deploying additional OMLTs in response to President Sarkozy's offer to President Obama on the margins of the NATO summit, but this effort is only in the initial stages. Finally, France expects to launch deployment of European Gendarmerie Forces (EGF) under the NATO Training Mission for Afghanistan (NTM-A) within the next couple of months. France will deploy 150 French gendarmerie forces (paramilitary troops trained to ensure civil order), and it has commitments of an additional 150 from Italy and 50 from Spain, with additional requests still outstanding. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Richier cited the current economic difficulties of providing additional financial assistance to Afghanistan, saying bluntly "we are broke." The Finance Ministry had initially only allotted USD 10 million Euros to civil assistance to Afghanistan for 2009, but Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan Pierre Lellouche and the Elysee had fought back, obtaining final agreement on USD 40 million for the year. Richier noted that he himself had informed FM Kouchner that, although the GOF continually states that "there is no purely military solution to Afghanistan," as a practical matter military assistance is currently what France is most able to give and it forms the vast majority of expected GOF efforts in Afghanistan for this year.

[1](#)3. (C) On possible military deployments, Richier informed us that the GOF is researching options to strengthen existing deployments in Afghanistan without adding substantial numbers of new troops. Currently, French planning is focused on the rotation of two French battalions from RC-Capital to RC-East at the end of the year, when they can turn over additional responsibilities to Afghan troops and other allies in Kabul. Richier said that this would be a "qualitative" improvement by rotating capable French troops from duties of helping maintain security in the capital to participating in active combat operations in Kapisa province where there is greater need. Ideally, these reinforcements would allow for sufficient progress within a couple of years to subdue the

insurgency and provide greater stability in RC-East. In turn, this would allow the GOF to show a visible sign of progress to the French public, which remains opposed to military deployments in Afghanistan.

¶4. (C) When asked about French contributions for training of police and the Afghan National Army, Richier stated that 150 French gendarmes will be deployed to Afghanistan by May or June. France has received additional commitments of 150 gendarmes from Italy and 50 gendarmes from Spain, and the GOF is pursuing additional reinforcements with other countries such as Turkey. The goal is to deploy 300-400 gendarmes, using the European Gendarmerie Force (a coordinating body that is not/not part of the European Union), which would then be placed under the authority of the recently approved NATO Training Mission for Afghanistan (NTM-A). The plan is to train them now and then use them initially in the Kabul region to ensure stability and backfill after the French troops deploy to Kapisa.

¶5. (C) Richier ruefully noted that President Sarkozy had offered the possibility of standing up additional OMLTs in his April 3 meeting with President Obama, but that this offer was spontaneous and had not been prepared by the staff. Richier is now tasked with further exploring this possibility, but it was only in the initial stages and he was not able to provide any further detail.

¶6. (C) Comment: In the current economic environment, it is clear that France possesses more military capacity than financial resources, and post believes that is where we should target our efforts for additional contributions for Afghanistan. Post notes that when it comes to money, similar requests for a significant French financial contribution to Pakistan have also run into serious resistance due to the current domestic budgetary situation. The best option is to focus now on President Sarkozy's reported offer of additional OMLTs, although it may take some time for French military planners to catch up to the President's spontaneous offer. End comment.

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